

# State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **MARYLAND COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS & MARYLAND HUMANITIES COUNCIL HOSTING THIRD EVENT IN *DEFYING DEFINITIONS* DIALOGUE**

***Practicing Democracy: What does "Liberty and Justice for All" Mean to Me? Discussion***  
**on November 13 at Saint Mary's County Library, Leonardtown Branch**

**Baltimore, MD** – The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR) and the Maryland Humanities Council (MHC) will host the third and final public dialogue for the *Defying Definitions* project on Wednesday, November 13 from 5:30pm-8pm at the Saint Mary's County Public Library, Leonardtown Branch, located at 23250 Hollywood Road. The event, titled *Practicing Democracy: What does "Liberty and Justice for All" Mean to Me?*, will feature small group discussions and a reflection on a photo gallery, all of which will explore the notions of equality and freedom in America. The event is free and open to the public. However, attendees are asked to register at (301) 475-2846 or <http://tinyurl.com/defydefstmrysc>.

This discussion follows two successful events hosted at Calvert Library Prince Frederick on September 23<sup>rd</sup> and the College of Southern Maryland on October 28<sup>th</sup>. Both events drew capacity-crowds and engaged the public on progress made in the area of civil rights in Maryland, as well as what challenges lay ahead. At the October 28<sup>th</sup> dialogue, participants remarked about *Defying Definitions*, "It made a lot of us think, sometimes outside of our comfort zones."; "The best part...was the real sense of community and connection that emerged in our group. It gave me renewed hope and faith in the power of conversation."; and "A healing of broken relationships took place." Overall, the consensus from these events remains, as one participant put it, "I am hopeful that we are making progress. It's so wonderful to have all these great people where we live."

The November 13<sup>th</sup> conversation is produced in partnership with St. Mary's Library County Library, St. Mary's County Community Mediation Center, and Democracy Conversations in St. Mary's County.

*Defying Definitions* is a public conversation and community engagement program exploring identity, stereotypes, and diversity. It challenges participants to reflect on how they perceive others, how they are perceived by others, and what they understand about themselves. The project utilizes the humanities (film, literature, photography, poetry, etc.) to bring people together for dialogue, both online and in community settings, with the goals of breaking down stereotypes, reducing conflict, and modeling civil and meaningful discussion. As this project is open and ongoing, every Marylander is invited and encouraged to visit [www.defyingdefinitions.org](http://www.defyingdefinitions.org) to join in the discussion and share their story. *Defying Definitions* is sponsored in part by the Maryland Public Policy Fellows Program, a collaborative program of the Maryland Judiciary's Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office and the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law's Center for Dispute Resolution.

**The Maryland Humanities Council** is a statewide educational 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The purpose of MHC is to stimulate and promote informed dialogue and civil engagement on issues critical to Marylanders. For more information, visit [www.mdhc.org](http://www.mdhc.org). MHC is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the State of Maryland, and the William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund, creator of the Baker Artist Awards: [www.bakerartistawards.org](http://www.bakerartistawards.org).

**The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights** represents the interest of the State to ensure equal opportunity for all through enforcement of Title 20 of the State Government Article and Title 19 of the State Finance & Procurement Article, Annotated Code of Maryland. MCCR investigates complaints of discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations and state contracts filed by members of protected classes under federal and state law. For additional information please visit [www.mccr.maryland.gov](http://www.mccr.maryland.gov).

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